

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Official Action mailed June 27, 2006.

In the present paper, claims 1 and 19 have been amended and claims 4 and 5 have been canceled. Claims 1-3 and 6-19 are now presented for the Examiner's consideration in view of the following remarks:

The Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings as not showing the contents of claims 12 and 13. Applicants respectfully traverse that objection.

Claim 12 is directed to a protective cover wherein the insulating members are removable from the wrapping member. FIGS 4 and 5 clearly show wrapping members having pockets for receiving the insulating members, and clearly show that the insulating members are not in contact with the wrapping members, as would be the case if the insulating members were permanently attached, for example, bonded using an adhesive (see specification at [0026]). The pockets are not shown to be permanently closed or sealed at the ends (*id.*). There is nothing to indicate that the insulating members are not removable by sliding them out of the pockets. It is therefore submitted that FIGS. 4 and 5 show insulating members that are removable from the wrapping member, as claimed in claim 12.

Claim 13 is directed to a protective cover having a fastening member that is a cinch strap attached to the wrapping member and extending the length of the wrapping member. FIG. 4 shows "a continuous fastening member 425" having a "cinching buckle 430" extending the length of the wrapping member 410 (see specification at [0031]). Applicants submit that a

fastening member having a cinching buckle is a “cinch strap” as claimed in claim 13, and that the elements of claim 13 are therefore shown in FIG. 4.

Applicants therefore request that the Examiner withdraw his objections to the drawings regarding the contents of claims 12 and 13.

The Present Application

The present application is directed to a method and apparatus for protecting fiber cable on a fiber cable reel. In particular, a protective cover for a fiber reel includes an elongate flexible wrapping member having a length sufficient to extend substantially around an outer circumferential surface of the optical fiber cable coil; a plurality of insulating members disposed on the wrapping member, said insulating members being arranged in proximity to each other to form an insulating region; and a fastening member arranged for fastening the wrapping member around the outer circumferential surface of the optical fiber cable coil.

Claim 1 of the present application has been amended to further require that the wrapping member includes a plurality of pockets, and said insulating members are disposed within said pockets, wherein pockets that are adjacent along the wrapping member, and the insulating members disposed in those pockets, overlap.

Another embodiment of the invention is a method for protecting an optical fiber cable coil stored on a fiber cable reel. The method includes the steps of wrapping a protective cover around an outer circumferential surface of the optical fiber cable coil, the protective cover including an elongate wrapping member having a plurality of pockets containing ceramic insulating members; and fastening the protective cover around the outer circumferential surface of the optical fiber cable coil.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,029,206 to Mykleby et al. ("Mykleby"), has rejected claims 3-7 and 10-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Mykleby in view of Examiner official notice, has rejected claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Mykleby in view of Examiner official notice and further in view of either U.S. Patent No. 6,935,502 to Stoli et al or U.S. Patent No. 5,165,543 to Heyda, and has rejected claims 9 and 14-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Mykleby in view of Examiner official notice and further in view of "Science Daily."

Claims 1-13

The Examiner has indicated that the subject matter shown in FIG. 5 is allowable. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for his careful evaluation of the subject matter shown.

Applicants have amended claim 1 of the present application by incorporating limitations similar to those of claims 4 and 5, which have been canceled. The limitation of canceled claim 5 has furthermore been reworded in claim 1 to limit its scope to the embodiment of FIG. 5. That limitation now requires that the "pockets that are adjacent along the wrapping member, and the insulating members disposed in those pockets, overlap."

Applicants submit that that limitation does not encompass within its scope the sketch provided by the Examiner on page 4 of the Official Action in rejecting claim 5. In that sketch, the overlap shown is between overlapping layers of the cover, and is not between pockets that are "adjacent along the wrapping member," as now claimed in claim 1

For that reason, Applicants submit that claim 1 is now patentable over the cited art, and that dependent claims 2, 3 and 6-13, which incorporate the limitations of claim 1, are patentable for at least the same reasons.

Applicants additionally submit that claim 9 is patentable for the additional reason set forth below with reference to claim 14.

Claims 14-19

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of independent claim 14 at least because the art of record does not teach or suggest a protective cover having a plurality of pockets containing ceramic insulating members.

In rejecting claim 14, the Examiner cites the Science Daily reference as teaching ceramic based foam. The Examiner alleges that it would have been obvious to substitute ceramic for the Ethafoam 200 disclosed by Mykleby for the insulating properties and low weight of the ceramic-based foam.

Mykleby, however, specifically teaches a covering that has flexibility and can yield to conform to the outer strands of cable:

It is important that the covering should prevent a foreign object from striking the cable insulation, so as to cause damage thereto. The cover material should also have some yield so that its inner surface will conform to the covered outer layers of cable on the reel so as to distribute the force of the impact from the foreign object, over a relatively large surface area of the insulation.

Mykleby at col. 1, lines 35-42. The paper composite covering that is the subject of the Mykleby patent was chosen for its conformance and flexibility:

The covering material 14 is flexible and may be made to conform to the outermost layers of the cable C mounted on the reel 12. Preferably, the covering material 14 comprises a continuous flexible sheet 22 and a plurality of upright walls 24 bonded on one edge only thereof to one surface of the continuous flexible sheet 22. The walls 24 are placed into close proximity to define a plurality of cells 26 which define a honeycomb arrangement, as seen in FIG. 4.

Mykleby, col. 3, lines 19-27. Clearly, any ceramic material, including the ceramic-based foam of Science Daily, with its brittle and unyielding physical properties, would be an inappropriate material choice for the cable storage package of Mykleby.

There is nothing in Mykleby or anywhere else in the art of record to suggest the substitution of a ceramic material for the foam plastic material described in the prior art section of Mykleby. Nowhere does Mykleby mention the desirability of thermal insulating properties in the disclosed cover. Instead, Mykleby's objective is to protect the cable from physical damage (Mykleby, col. 1, lines 61-68), in particular by conforming to the outermost layers of cable to distribute the force of impact. A foam plastic material performs that function. A ceramic material is incapable of performing that function. The combination made by the Examiner therefore goes directly against the teachings of Mykleby.

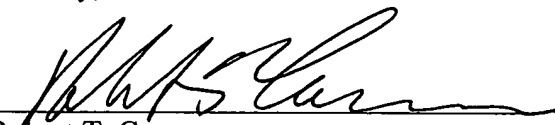
Applicants therefore submit that independent claim 14, together with dependent claims 15-19, are patentable for at least that reason. Applicants further submit that claim 19 is patentable for the additional reason set forth above with reference to claim 1.

Conclusion

Applicants therefore respectfully assert that claims 1-3 and 5-19 are now in condition for allowance, and earnestly request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowance.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the present case, the Examiner should not hesitate in contacting the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully,

By 
Robert T. Canavan
Reg. No. 37,592
Telephone: 908-707-1568

Canavan & Monka LLC
250 State Route 28, Suite 207
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

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